

COVID-19 Contact Protocols



COVID-19, the illness caused by infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, continues to circulate worldwide and in local communities. It is important to clearly understand the necessary steps to take if you test positive for COVID-19, if someone in your workplace tests positive, or if you are identified as a close contact of a positive case. The information below outlines the important steps to take in each of these scenarios.

Prompt and efficient notification of positive cases, contact tracing of infected individuals and treatment of affected spaces is contingent upon all University members completing their daily symptom attestation using [ReopenCU](#), the University's single checkpoint for COVID-19 health information.



If you are identified as a close contact of a COVID-19-positive individual at Columbia:

1. You will be contacted by the [Columbia Contact Tracing Program](#) and provided instruction to **quarantine** for 14 days, based on your exposure. Note, you will not be told who you were exposed to, as this is protected personal health information.
2. Immediately update your status on [Reopen CU](#), indicating that you have been in close contact with a positive case, which will produce a **Red Pass**.
3. Begin quarantine immediately by either staying home, or returning home if you are out in public or on campus. Monitor yourself for fever and symptoms twice daily. See [How to Quarantine A GUIDE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF](#).

What happens when someone in your workplace, laboratory, School or Department tests positive?

1. The Columbia Contact Tracing Program will initiate outreach to impacted individuals, accordingly.
2. The relevant School/Department will be notified.
3. The School/Department may optionally issue additional notification to alert members of the community that the Columbia Contact Tracing Program may be in touch with close contacts.
4. Follow the instructions of contact tracers and your School/Department, as applicable.

In general, a single positive case in a School or Department will not result in or require a widespread shutdown of activities. If you are not contacted by the University's Contact Tracing Program, you do not need to take any additional steps, such as **quarantine**, testing or avoidance of areas of your workplace.

If you are notified that you have tested positive for COVID-19 or you develop symptoms:

1. **Notify** covidtesttrace@columbia.edu if you were tested outside of the Columbia Testing Program, contact tracing at the University cannot begin until the program is notified.
2. Please **isolate** immediately at home or, if symptoms develop at work, inform your supervisor and return home to **isolate**. See the [How to Isolate A GUIDE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF](#).
3. Immediately update your status on [Reopen CU](#) app with your current status.
4. You will be contacted by the [Columbia Contact Tracing Program](#) within one business day. Please provide the requested information related to your whereabouts on campus and close contacts.
5. You will also be contacted by your local department of health to collect information about your non-Columbia contacts and whereabouts.

Please see [Fact Sheet #12](#) for more information on the difference between "quarantine" and "isolation".

If you are a Departmental Administrator or Human Resources representative, and a positive case is identified among your faculty or staff:

1. If a staff member notifies you directly, confirm they have updated the [Reopen CU](#). To initiate contact tracing, inform covidtesttrace@columbia.edu or call the **COVID Hotline** (212) 854-9355 (M-F, 9a-5pm).
2. If the individual was in the work area within the past 24-hours, close any spaces they used until direction received on appropriate cleaning.
3. Once the Contact Tracing Program has completed their interview with the case, the department will be guided on which areas need additional cleaning. Departments should then contact the campus-specific Facilities Department to initiate sanitization procedures in the affected space(s).
4. Ensure affected spaces remain closed until notification from Facilities that cleaning has been completed.
5. Notify your Department in accordance with recommendations from the Contact Tracing Program.